

A Case Study: Chanel or Gabrielle? Authenticity and iconic branding: A case study.

Sonja Verwey (Phd)

Professor: Department of Strategic Communication

School of Communication

University of Johannesburg

sverwey@uj.ac.za

Department of Strategic Communication

Aucklandpark Campus

University Road

Aucklandpark

Johannesburg

2006

Tel (w) +27 11 559 4070

Cellular + 27 082 853 6606

A Case Study Chanel or Gabrielle? Authenticity and iconic branding

Abstract

Within a postmodern economy consumers increasingly seek out connections with brands that not only satisfy their functional and higher order hedonistic needs, but also allow them to express their authentic selves and social affiliations in ways that affirm who they are or aspire to be. An authentic brand has the potential to deliver both utilitarian and hedonistic value to the consumer, which may ultimately lead to a relationship of brand love or affinity that is both emotional and passionate, and evolves over time. For the true luxury client luxury is more than a logo, instead it is an appreciation of fine works, fine craftsmanship, creativity and the making of a legend. It is within this context that this paper aims to explore Chanel's brand positioning and strategy in particular relation to the *Gabrielle* perfume launch. From this it is demonstrated that the focus of this strategy was the successful synthesis of: (a celebration of the Chanel heritage; and, its' embrace of the new, thereby authentically reinterpreting its iconic brand values within an emerging contemporary cultural context.

1. Introduction and background

2.

“Luxury is in fashion and fashion is in luxury” (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009, p. 1). Globally the luxury market grew by 5% to an estimated 1.2 trillion Euro in 2017, despite the global slowdown in economic growth. Bain & Co (2017) attributes this growth to the “millennialization” of luxury customers, even though 85% of the current growth in the luxury market is still attributed to Generation Y and Z consumers. However, the generational shift in mind set has prompted the luxury goods market to rethink both the product ranges that are offered in this market, as well as how these luxury goods are delivered to appeal to younger consumers.

Luxury brands can be defined from various perspectives, but the concept of rarity or exclusivity preponderates in most of these definitions. There is also general agreement between researchers that luxury is associated with both tangible and intangible attributes and benefits (Kim, Cevellon, & Lloyd, 2015). Tangible attributes include price, quality, and craftsmanship (Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000). Intangible attributes tend to be more symbolic and wide-ranging. Bomsel (2014) views luxury as social process that involves arbitrary individual choice between goods and services whose hedonistic value is based on vertical differentiation that is accomplished through symbolic communication with the consumer. In addition, it would appear as if individual behaviour varies according to personal effects, such as hedonistic motives; and, interpersonal effects, such as snobbery or conspicuous consumption. Bomsel (2014) argues that the “social signification” of luxury is more visible if it is linked with experience, codes or values that are recognised by society, and if the myths of experience is confirmed by ‘sedimentation’ of messages over time. Kapferer (2009, p.22) notes that because of the personal nature of luxury it should not be spoken of unless it is qualified by the preface ‘for me.’ This kind of luxury is referred to as ‘my luxury’ where individuals often buy what they do not need at a price far above the functional value of the service or product, to pamper and reward themselves (Kapferer, 2012, p. 455). Atwal and Williams (2008, p. 343) argue that such ‘escapist’ activities are a central feature of much of luxury consumption, and are premised on both high involvement and the quality of the luxury experience. A luxury brand may therefore possess individual value that extends beyond social value, and that may enhance a consumer’s self-identity or extend a sense of self (Hennigs et al., 2012). For the true luxury client ‘luxury is more than a logo, instead it is an appreciation of fine works, fine craftsmanship, creativity and the making of a legend’ (Kapferer, 2009). It is within this context that this paper aims to explore Chanel’s brand positioning and strategy in particular relation to the *Gabrielle* perfume launch. From this it is demonstrated that the focus of this strategy was the successful synthesis of: (a) a celebration of the Chanel heritage; and, (b) its’ embrace of the new. It is also explored how this particular strategy fits with iconic versus luxury positioning, as relating specifically to implicit messaging and narrative transformation. Furthermore, it is illustrated that the strategy was carried out in four phases and/or stages [(a) the announcement of the launch; (b) the contextualisation of the launch; (c) the campaign; and, (d) iconic and indexical prompts, and that at each of these there was a focus on brand authenticity.

2. Authenticity and luxury

A review of research findings conducted by Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland, and Farrelly. (2016) indicate that high authenticity brands not only offer opportunities for self-authentication, but also support individual identity projects by delivering value

that provides both functional and sensory benefits. An authentic brand therefore has the potential to deliver both utilitarian and hedonistic value to the consumer, which may ultimately lead to a relationship of brand love or affinity that is both emotional and passionate, and evolves over time (Caroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Napoli et al. (2016) argue that authenticity and sustainability will follow if commitment to the craft is built around quality and sincerity, since this drives the delivery of the greatest value to the consumer. Highly authentic brands are often elevated to iconic status in that they “carry a heavy symbolic load for consumers who often rely on them to communicate to others who they are or aspire to be” (Torelli, Chui, Key, & Amaral, 2009, p.108). According to Hollis (2008), iconic brands possess the following three characteristics:

- It has strong cultural roots that tap into society’s values, sometimes even inspiring a shift in those values.
- It possesses physical or symbolic features whereby it becomes instantly recognizable.
- It has a compelling story and manages to remain true to their original values while also reinterpreting these values within emerging contemporary culture contexts.

Luxury products always comprise both functionality and symbolism. As already discussed, the symbolic component bears reference to both the social and personal aspects of luxury that allow the individual to express both their true and aspirational self, and by signalling prestige for others through recognised social signification. Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2010) suggest that the negotiation of brand meaning is a social activity, which entails a social learning process. As Sheinin and Biehal (1999) have noted, perceived brand authenticity is an important component of consumer brand knowledge that influence both brand attitude as well as brand purchase decisions. In order to be perceived as authentic the brand must authentically embody all features specific to luxury and authenticity (Beverland, 2005). Napoli et al. (2014) distinguish three dimensions of brand authenticity content: quality commitment, heritage, and sincerity. In addition, Morhart et al. (2015) identified the importance of symbolic brand qualities for brand authenticity, and therefore incorporate symbolism as a fourth dimension of brand authenticity. Research findings confirm that authenticity is an important aspect of luxury brand consumption process (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Boyle, 2003; Holt, 2002). The degree of perceived authenticity influences consumer choice through a combination of indexical and iconic cues, and the higher the perceived brand authenticity the more likely it is to positively influence brand attachment, brand commitment, brand loyalty, and word of mouth (Choi, Kim and Matilla, 2015; Morhart, Malär, Guèvremont, Girardin, and Grohmann, 2015).

Consumers rely on indexical cues for objective brand information and knowledge, but iconic cues symbolically communicate the brands essence through brand content, advertising or design features (Brown et al., 2003; Leigh et al., 2006; Morhart et al., 2015). However, as noted by Martinec (2004) perceptions of both iconic and indexical signs are highly influenced by personal perceptual preferences, as well as by the degree of brand schemacity (or tendency to process information in relation to brands) that consumers exhibit (Carsana & Jolibert, 2018). Consumers with brand schemacity are more brand -focused and more likely to be receptive to brand information in general, and consequently may perceive authenticity of brands as more important (Carsana & Jolibert, 2018). Consumers who do not have this propensity give preference to other information first (Komatsu, 1992). Compared with brand a-

schematic consumers, brand-schematic consumers attribute more integrity, continuity, credibility, and symbolism to personal luxury brands (Carsana & Jolibert, 2018). Consumers are therefore not equally receptive to brand authenticity, nor do they agree on the cues from which to infer brand authenticity. Starbuck and Milliken (1988) note that “people have to have numerous sense making frameworks that contradict each other [because] these numerous frameworks create plentiful interpretative opportunities” As such brand authenticity, is not a magic key to brand management, but rather relies on constant contextualisation and adaptation and fine-tuning in respect of brand audiences.

3. Brand engagement

Brand consumers construct brand authenticity within the relational ties with the brand, especially if these (re)-activate connections with place, past and authentic core values (Visconti, 2010). More importantly, brand management is no longer regarded as a brand building vision, but is instead viewed as an activity of co-creative engagement, where the brand only partially controls the brand narrative, and has to contend with and leverage ‘a symphony of old and new brand meanings’ (Diamond et al., 2009). In addition brands now also have to manage brand meaning in the online brand space where the distinction between producers and consumers has blurred (prosumption), and has shifted the focus beyond collective consumption (consuming brands together) toward collaborative consumption (a cultural desire for co-creation and self-expression) (Verwey, 2015). This type of ‘participatory culture’ entails the involvement of others, audiences, consumers and fans in creating both brand content and culture (Fuchs 2014), and is made possible through what is termed “spreadable” by Jenkins, Ford and Green (2013). Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) identify two types of engagement with respect to online media: personal (stimulation and inspiration; social facilitation; temporal; self-esteem and civic mindedness; intrinsic enjoyment) and social interactive (utilitarian; participation and associating; community).

In order to respond to the challenges posed by interactive technologies luxury brand managers and marketers are hard pressed to develop integrated brand strategies that can guide resource allocation and brand-related activities so as to offer all customers a superior customer experience across all interaction/ touch points, including digital. These brand experiences should be focused on generating brand affinity while also soliciting brand advocacy through participation and co-creation (Casamassima & Roya-Vela, 2010; Kim, Kwon, Moon, & Sung, 2010; Squires 2011).

Brand engagement in these contexts are directed at establishing brand resonance and a shared brand relevance with communities of affinity through the acceleration of consumer-centric work to build engaging brand content and conversations. All brand activities and actions have to confirm the brands identity. The image of the brand must be firmly established (Schallehn, 2012b). This means that brand engagement becomes of strategic importance as a transformational strategy (Percy & Rossiter, 1992) that is associated with positive drive enhancement, sensory gratification, intellectual stimulation, or social approval. Brun, and Castelli, (2012) conclude that an integrated brand presence depends on: (a) consistency (consistent brand content); (b) congruence (between communication and behavior); and, (c) continuity of brand communication and implementation. Brands can activate processes of self-authentication by pursuing their coherence to their “brand aura” (Brown et al., 2003) regardless of markets and times.

4. Brand experience

The purpose of brand communication is to symbolically engage luxury brand consumers by maintaining the flow of messages on the nature, novelty and the individual and social utility of the experience offered (Bomsel, 2014). The purpose of this communication is to highlight and imply the experience proposed to the consumer—but also to allow the consumer who has chosen the luxury item, to communicate with society (Bomsel 2014). This entails that brand communication has to extend beyond an image of quality, performance and authenticity. Brand experiences can be formulated through a range of drivers such as physical, functional, and emotional brand attributes (Biel, 1992; Kotler & Keller 2006; Plummer 2000); brand personality characteristics (Aaker, 1997, 1999); nostalgic experiences (Goulding 1999; Sierra & McQuitty 2007) and brand heritage (Aaker & Drolet 1996; Batra & Homer 2004; Plummer 2000; Simms & Trott, 2006). While sensory appeal has always been the message focus of luxury brands, luxury brand communication has become increasingly complex in attempting to sell an experience that relates to the lifestyle constructs of consumers. This entails that brand communication has to extend beyond an image of quality, performance and authenticity.

Traditional approaches to experiential marketing of luxury goods have been further disrupted by the emergence of new technologies. Three disruptive changes are evident: (a) technology has enabled social connections and narrowed the distance between luxury designers and consumers, and enabled interactions on social platforms like YouTube, Instagram, WeChat; (b) a shift from selling in physical stores to online; and, (c) technology-related change in the way luxury goods are designed and created. The digital transition is largely due the demographic and generational transition in the luxury consumer market. This transition has resulted in changes in the luxury segment (Bain & Co, 2017) with the replacement of the often satiated, “baby boomers” as the highest- spending luxury consumer group, with “Generation Y.” This shift has resulted in “millennialization” of the luxury industry. The Economist (2014) forecast that “by 2026 the main consumers of luxury will be Millennials.”

5. Millennialization of luxury brand consumers

The Millennials are the generation of people born between 1980 and 2000 (Young & Hinesly, 2012). This generation is 1.8 billion members strong and is to date the largest consumer generation (Millennial Week, 2014). Millennials are the fastest growing section of the luxury market and spend more money on luxury brands than any generation before them (Baron, 2015; Cardamenis, 2015; Gustafson, 2015), and they also start buying luxury products at a much younger age even though they have not attained peak income levels. The Millennials are discerning consumers that expect their own values to be represented by the brands that they purchase (Boston Consulting Group, 2014). Millennials place a lot of importance on brands as a means to communicate their identity, both online and offline (Baron, 2015; Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009: 52). Millennial luxury consumers are more oriented toward non-conspicuous consumption, and their social signaling of luxury purchases is often more discrete.

The Millennials are a generation that has grown up with digitalization and they view many things skeptically. They expect transparency, authenticity, ethical working conditions and practices from luxury goods manufacturers (Young, 2014a). Sustainability is one way that Millennial consumers can justify their luxury consumption, and connect with their values (beyond the need to express their authentic

selves). Millennials have grown up with the notion of “democratisation of luxury” or “new luxury,” which entails that luxury brands are increasingly more accessible (Brun & Castelli, 2013: 833). Luxury brands have responded to the need for increasing accessibility by introducing entry-level product ranges such as make-up and accessories. Traditional brand extensions have been replaced with “masstige” entry-level product ranges that allow Millennials to communicate their identity, and to stand out from the crowd (Ellwood & Shekar, 2008), until they can afford the more expensive signature ranges. The value placed on accessibility poses a challenge for luxury brands to take advantage of a new and growing range of digital engagement platforms.

Given that most engagement with Millennials happen via their mobile phones, brands must also be aware of the ways that traditional luxury goods can be connected to digital platforms and activities. Technology forms an integrative part of the lives of many Millennials Barton, Fromm and Egan (2012), and this generation is used to having ready access to information and knowledge from an early age (Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009). Through investment in both e-commerce and mobile commerce, luxury brands offer greater accessibility and ease of purchase on channels that Millennials value, and are present on, while also reaching other consumers who do not form part of this generation (Baron, 2015; Barton et al., 2012; Boston Consulting Group, 2014).

6. Co-creation and transmedia branding

Millennials are ardent social media users who both consume and actively co-create or contribute to content displayed on social media platforms (Baron, 2015; Barton et al., 2012; Boston Consulting Group, 2014; Cardamenis, 2015). Millennials trust and base their purchase decisions on peer-reviews that are easily accessed on the Internet (Baron, 2015; Barton et al., 2012b). This also means that they find a lot of information about products online (Yarrow & O'Donnell, 2009). At the same time, luxury brands take into account the visual preferences of Millennials by employing social media to publish engaging content and as an outlet for creativity and story telling to further engage with their younger audiences – and also by collaborating with bloggers and other influencers of this generation (Barton et al., 2012a; Boston Consulting Group, 2014; The Economist, 2014; Schmidt, 2015).

Prosumers, who both consume and produce media, have a different relationship with a brand to traditional consumers, as they are more actively involved in the brand's story. Social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and Snapchat, are highly visual social media communities where both appearances and shared experiences are ostensibly valued. (Faw, 2012). The participatory nature of transmedia branding enables an active contribution in an immersive story, thereby strengthening prosumer engagement in the brand's world (Du Plessis, 2018). Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) suggest that when a plausible story is retained, it tends to become more substantial because it is related to past experience, connected to significant identities, and used as a source of guidance for further action and interpretation. Weick et al. (2005) point to the importance of sense making in the process of engaging the consumer since it is the primary site where meanings materialize that inform and constrain identity and action. Sense-making is described by Taylor and Van Every (2000) as a consensually constructed, coordinated system of action. This confirms the importance of brand storytelling in managing tensions that drive emotional involvement of the social collective with the brand narrative for both brands and brand communities. Narrative transportation occurs when the consumer is absorbed into the brand narrative, become part of the brand story and live the brand

story from the inside out (Green & Brock, 2000). Kim, Lloyd and Ceverllon (2014) suggest that consumers from varying cultures and exposed to Western luxury advertisements may create different, culturally-constituted and socially-developed narratives, and may engage with a luxury brand communication through varying routes. Within a diachronic cultural perspective the formation of myth over time provides a route to narrative transportation, while from a synchronic cultural perspective “concepts such as social distance, social aspirations and journeys through upward social mobility” is a rich contributor to, and an enhancer of narrative transportation (Kim et al., 2014). As such luxury brands can be conceived as cultural narrators (Visconti, 2010) who should tell their story in their own unique and creative voice that represents the ultimate expression of the brand’s culture.

7. A brief introduction to Chanel as an iconic luxury brand

The brand Chanel (S.A.) is a French fashion house that specialises in accessories (e.g., bags, and leather products), beauty products (e.g., cosmetics, and fragrances), fashion (e.g., couture, ready-to-wear, and shoes), and jewellery (e.g., costume jewellery, fine jewellery, and watches). As a brand it one of the most highly ranked, and iconic labels of not only the fashion industry and this dominant positioning is indicative of its’ performance, popularity, sustainability and value; which is an estimated net value of \$ 7.3 billion as of May 2017 (Forbes, 2017). It is also considered by millennials as one of the top five luxury names with Chanel in first position, and Dior, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, and Gucci following in that order (Owens, 2018). First founded in 1910 by Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel (1883-1971) – also known as ‘Coco Chanel’ to the world – Benedick (2017) argues that the brand was built *around* her rather than being built by her. Consistency and continuity of its’ heritage, for this reason, has been key to its’ positioning and strategy. This, Benedick (2017) notes, particularly pertains to: (a) the Chanel brand design; (b) the Chanel brand development; and, (c) The Chanel brand strategy. These aspects of Chanel’s general positioning and strategy are discussed in the following sections.

7.1 Brand design

Brand colours: The brand colours of the fashion house, it is noted, have not changed in 100 years. Its’ consistency and continuity is further seen in its’ “storytelling” and/or symbolism suggestive of its’ values – beige is considered neutral, and warm; black is classic and elegant; gold is indicative of prosperity; passion is presented by red; and, perfection and simplicity is symbolized by the use of white (Benedick, 2017). These are consistently evident in their packaging and product ranges.

Retail spaces Chanel’s retail spaces, it is stated, is concerned with the consumers’ experiences; and ensuring that the environment is luxurious, receiving, and warm (Benedick, 2017). It has also further been noted that these retail spaces incorporate light and mirrors in particular ways. Nagasawa and Irisawa (2011), in this regard, suggests that the incorporation of mirrors is a particular strategy to “incorporate” the shopper in that they are able to (physically) see themselves as part of the space. A further reading of this strategy, however, sees it as symbolic of Gabrielle Chanel’s love for mirrors and how she used these in her personal spaces (Chaney, 2011; Madsen, 2009; Picardie, 2011) – that is, as a heritage of its’ spaces.

7.2 Brand development

Digital spaces. In the context of the digital era, it is especially important for luxury names to have an online presence (Benedick, 2017). Despite the fact that luxury players did not adopt these early on – because of being cautious in the management of their (online) reputations – they have since become dominant in these spaces, with main platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube (Aliferis, 2017). Chanel has been especially prominent and successful in their use of these. As a brand it boasts the most followers globally (with 57 million over the world). It is also considered the leading luxury player on all of these platforms with the single exception of Facebook where both Chanel and Louis Vuitton are at around 20 million, but Chanel is slightly surpassed (Aliferis, 2017). Considering that their following ranked sixth in 2016, it is emphasised that their growth on these platforms (estimated at 50% in a year) is “nothing short of spectacular” (Aliferis, 2017, para. 6). In exploring how they outpaced its’ rivals, it is suggested that Chanel followed a meticulously planned strategy that:

Differentiated promotion. In addition to being consistent with generating media, Chanel’s content can be divided into: advertisements and campaigns; “behind the brand” clips (e.g., atelier visits, and creator profiles); and, fashion shows and runways. While advertisements and campaigns have been the focus of most luxury players, Chanel has focused more on the promotion of other types of content – behind the brand clips, and fashion shows and runways have encouraged engagement and organic reach of up to 6%. This is an especially impressive rate, given that this number is usually between 0.05% and 0.09% for advertisements and campaigns – and can be attributed to the engaging followers in a personal way (e.g., in that they can partake in runways).

Multi-platform content. It can be argued that most brands’ content are exactly the same over platforms, but Chanel’s content is crafted especially for the platform where it is posted in that the content is edited for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. They also create more posts from a shoot, in re-editing and reusing these differently over its’ platforms – illustrating that lower production values can have an increased organic reach.

Focused primarily on video. Chanel generated more than 300 million views on Facebook and YouTube, and – compared to other luxury players – are far in the lead with more than 860 000 subscribers on YouTube. More so than any other industry leaders, Chanel consistently posts videos; and content is covered more frequently, and more regularly as a result of this. This creates a faithful following, because it engages its’ viewers (Aliferis, 2017).

Fashion shows. Chanel’s fashion shows and runways are suggestive of the brand’s continued creativity. The elaborate installations made to “transport,” have included in the past: a casino, a created subway, a lion measuring more than 10 metres, a space shuttle – and, more recently, an enchanted forest for its 2018-2019 Autumn/Winter show. While these generate interest and media reports, they are successful because they are accessible to all audiences (in that they are live streamed via video), and engage them in the runway “story” in a subjective way (Aliferis, 2017, Benedick, 2017). They are, for this reason, not elitist – but inclusive, while also being luxurious.

Innovation. Although Chanel has “iconic” products and/or styles (e.g., the 2.55 Bag, the Chanel No. 5 fragrance, jersey as material, and suits from tweed) that are central to its’ line of products, Chanel also continues to create and innovate (Benedick, 2017). This demonstrates that they do not merely rely on the status and success of these iconic products and/or styles, but that they can make new products that are just as successful. Examples of this include launches of new product ranges, seasonally, across

their beauty, and couture and fashion lines specifically. Launches that have recently been released also include the Gabrielle bag, and the J12 watch (which was immensely successful).

Muses as advocates. It is argued that from early in its' history, Chanel capitalised on the power of the stars and how they could be used in promoting its' status (Benedick, 2017). An early example of this includes Marilyn Monroe who famously stated that she wore nothing but Chanel No. 5 to bed in a feature in *LIFE Magazine* (April 7th, 1952). There was an immediate increase in the perfume's sales, and the legend of the perfume resulted from this. Another example, at a later stage, is the support that the brand had from celebrated personalities of the time (such as Elizabeth Taylor, Grace Kelly, Jackie Kennedy, Jane Fonda, and Jeanne Moreau) as loyal patrons (Madsen, 2009). However, more recently, this included "muses" as part of its' strategy – that is, celebrities that are the "faces" of its' products, with current examples including: actress Kristen Stewart as the face of *Gabrielle*, actress Keira Knightley as the face of *Mademoiselle*, and actress and model Lily-Rose Depp as the face of the *Chanel No.5 L'eau*.

Muses as reflection of heritage personality. However, it is important to note that these stars are used not as "advertising" [e.g., where the brand relies on the star's status to survive (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009)] – but as advocacy in that they naturally and organically promote the product. With the incorporation of muses into this strategy, this has also meant that the stars used: (a) are aligned to elegance, liberty, and modernity as principles and values; in that, (b) they emulate the founder (Gabrielle Chanel), in that they are in her likeness [e.g., they are androgynous in their appearance, their hair is short, and they are slim (Madsen, 2009; Picardie, 2011)]. That is, they embrace the image of a modern woman. The focus, for this reason, is not on them as stars – but on the heritage of its' personality.

7.3 Brand strategy

Products. In addition to adhering to luxury marketing rules about: communicating luxury (e.g., by not advertising a product, but communicating about it); distribution (e.g., in creating and managing rarity); pricing (e.g., by increasing prices yearly, and not having reductions or sales); and, production (e.g., perceived value, and product quality) as set out by Kapferer and Bastien (2009), Chanel also has an appreciation for its' iconic items and products such as the 2.55 Bag, the Chanel No. 5 perfume, and their classic suits made from tweed. There has been continuity in the line of these products over the past \pm 100 years (Benedick, 2017), and they have become key pieces with "signature" style – but are also made modern and relevant by "stretching" (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). That is, there is an "extension" of these products: the 2.55 Bag was made available in a modern "reissued" style; Chanel No. 5 was extended into the Chanel No. 5 L'eau perfume released in 2016, and marketed as more modern scent; and there is a continued interpretation of its' stylistic values into more modern and relevant styles. This fosters a growing interest in these products so that they are more relevant and do not become stagnant, and last a lifetime.

Storytelling. Acknowledging that the brand was built around Gabrielle Chanel and her life narrative, it is argued that the brand consistently – covertly, and overtly – relies on storytelling and symbol use (Benedick, 2017). This consistent and integral part of its' positioning and strategy is supported by both the brand logo – created by Chanel herself in 1925 – which has remained the same over the years, as well as more indirect symbol use. Here, the indirect symbol use is visible in their campaigns and marketing strategies, and products – and, how these present and relate to the "story" of

Chanel. These include marketing strategies where Chanel's contributions are referenced, even if they are not the focus of the marketed product [e.g., the black dress is featured in the Chanel No. 5 campaign print of 2013, and the feature film that formed part of this referenced Chanel's career as a dancer ("I'm a dancer!"), her life as a "star," and her romances]. This is extended further to its products, in that these are often reference her: the camellia fine jewellery range is a reference to her favourite flower; the *Les Exclusifs* perfume range (with names such as Boy Chanel, Bel Respiro, La Pausa, and Misia) indicate the key places and people in her "story"; the *Lucky Charms* leather product range is a reference to her superstitions [e.g., she always had a bunch of wheat close to her, as emblematic of fortune and prosperity (Madsen, 2009)]; and so forth.

Values. As the brand has been built around Gabrielle Chanel and her life narrative, it is contended that its' principles and values are too. An exploration of her life narrative reveals that despite an early narrative of powerlessness, rejection, and sadness, and having faced many hardships [e.g., the death of her mother, her father's rejection, her lack of social status, and her being orphaned (Chaney, 2011; Madsen, 2009; Picardie, 2011)], Gabrielle Chanel managed to be successful. As noted by Picardie (2011), this exemplifies a 'rags to riches' story and/or tale in which her ambition, aspirations, determination, and industriousness prevailed over her struggles. In this regard it is suggested that Chanel – and an exploration of her life – could be extremely inspiring others, particularly to women (Verwey, 2018). This is reinforced by the statement that, although Chanel was in the "...business of fashion, her job was to inspire women" (McCarthy, 2014, para. 12). This inspiration – and the 'lessons' that resulted from this – is that, like Gabrielle Chanel, any individual has to potential to: (a) challenge mores and norms, especially in fighting for a self that is true, (b) not be defined by their past, with the power to re-write their story, and (c) enjoy a life on their own terms (Verwey, 2018). This is resonated by the statement that "If [one] is born without wings, do nothing to prevent them from growing" (Chanel, as cited in McCarthy, 2014, para. 10). Here, her ambition, aspirations, determination, and industriousness also inform the principles and values of the brand in that they espouse liberty and modernity. In this regard they sell to someone – that is, the liberated and modern purchaser – rather than selling something (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009).

8. A case study: The Gabrielle launch

Chanel announced the launch of its' "major new perfume" (Moulton, 2017, para. 1), *Gabrielle*, on the 3rd of July 2017 via its Instagram platform. The launch party then followed this announcement on the 4th of July 2017, with the official release set for the 1st of September 2017. As Moulton (2017) notes, this release represented Chanel's first independent and new perfume in 15 years [since the *Chanel Chance* launch in 2002 (Moulton, 2017)]. For Moulton (2017, para.3) this also defined and demonstrated how the launch of a perfume could be successful in the "digital era," as discussed further in the next sections.

8.1 Phase 1: The announcement of the launch

The announcement of the Gabrielle launch was made public on the 3rd of July 2017 via Chanel's Instagram platform. The launch party followed this up on the 4th of July 2017. Moulton (2017) compares the labels' launch party for its' previous scent – *Chanel Chance* – to the *Gabrielle* launch party specifically. In comparing these, Moulton (2017, para. 4) states that the *Gabrielle* launch was marked by its' "fragrance journey" and the high-technology immersion that it offered: a GIF-booth allowed

attendees to create the impression of being inside the perfume, and then filming this; the bottle design was deconstructed into a glass passage; and, a holographic image of the perfume bottle “burst into a shower of virtual of white flowers,” with these flowers being the focal point of the scent.

For Moulton (2017), this high-technology immersion and launch represented both a celebration of Chanel’s heritage, and, its’ embrace of the new. This, it is further implied, was key to the launch of the perfume to the public. This is because – from a positioning and strategy view – the successful synthesis of these: (a) allowed for implicit messaging and narrative transportation; and, in doing so, (b) encouraged engagement [in that consumer decision-making and judgement is more positive when offered with opportunities for greater ownership, in making the objective subjective (Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Folse, Guidry-Moulard, & Raggio, 2012; Kim, Lloyd, & Cervellon, 2015)]. In exploring this further, it seems that the strategy used was one that encouraged “immersion” by means of the senses, so that the objective (i.e., the bottle of perfume) was made subjective (i.e., there was an experience of the ‘fragrance journey’). It is noted that this particular strategy is valuable to brand positioning and brand value, because consumers are able to project themselves into the storylines – e.g., by being “inside” and/or part of the perfume story, as with the GIF-booth, the glass passage, and holographic images at the launch party (Kim et al., 2015).

However, being cognisant that this was experienced by individuals – such as ambassadors of the brand (e.g., campaign ‘faces’), associates, celebrities, and brand partners (e.g., Olivier Polge, Chanel’s in-house perfumer) – whom could more easily project themselves into these storylines, because they were familiar with its’ heritage and narrative; this brings into consideration how these experiences of “immersion” were offered to the public. For brands that are considered iconic, however, offering these opportunities pose a potential problem in that they have to balance the consumers’ projections of themselves into these storylines, with the brands’ existing heritage and narrative(s). A challenge, then, to iconic labels particularly pertains to the contextualisation of their existing heritage and narrative(s), and the positioning of these specific to audiences and consumers that are not familiar with its’ heritage and narrative(s). That is, ‘How could the existing heritage and narrative(s) be made relevant?’

8.2 Phase 2: The contextualisation of the Gabrielle launch

In the following section, it is considered how Chanel contextualised the *Gabrielle* launch for the public so that the brands’ existing heritage and narrative was preserved, while also encouraging narrative transportation. In anticipation of the launch of the perfume, Chanel – beginning on the 19th of August 2017 (approximately 2 weeks before the Gabrielle official release), and ending on the 28th of August 2017 (3 days before the Gabrielle official release) – posted a series of six, all black-and-white images, photos, and videos on its’ Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter platforms. These were all based off of a 2-minute video, which combined: (a) a narrated “storyline” titled *Gabrielle, the pursuit of passion*, with (b) images that are a personal reference to Gabrielle Chanel (the brands’ founder, who was a couturier and established fashion icon during the 20th century, and more commonly known as ‘Coco Chanel’ to the world) and her life.

(a) The narrated storyline

In considering and exploring the narrative, or storyline, it is important to note that this campaign was launched as part of the *Inside Chanel* strategy. Here, the *Inside Chanel* strategy is used by the brand in offering opportunities for the public to learn

more about its' story – as reflected, too, by its' title. First launched in 2012, the *Inside Chanel* strategy uses an archival site in documenting the encounters and events that not only had an impact on the life of Gabrielle Chanel, but that also have influence on the label today; as well as the French house's major milestones (Fitzpatrick, 2012). It features an interactive timeline, and – importantly – a series of videos in offering opportunities for the public to gain intimate knowledge of the label's story, and to partake in and be transported by this. This, then, can be considered an example of a narrative strategy in that the videos – also called “Chapters” (that cover aspects such as “The Camellia,” “The Jacket,” and “No. 5”), as is consistent with a “story” – give insight into the heritage of the label, but also about where it is moving towards. All chapters, for example, finish off with a “To be continued...” with the implication that the story is never “done” – but that it evolves over time (since 2012, there have been 21 chapters so far). The invitation that it offers, thus, is not only to learn about the story – but also to partake in it as it progresses. By keeping the length of these at ± 2 minutes (Aliferis, 2017), these do not demand the luxury of time from viewers – but immerses them in a manner that is “digest-able,” manageable, and swift.

In considering the contextualisation of the *Gabrielle* launch specifically, it is important to look at the narrative of its' chapter (Chapter 21) – *Gabrielle, the pursuit of passion*. In examining this narrative, it is clear that there is an explicit reference to:

- the character (e.g., “dare to transform”, “foster genuine, strong, and absolute friendships”, “seize beauty”);
- life (e.g., by making reference to her friendships with Cocteau, Dali, Diaghilev, and Picasso, and her personal relationships with Boy Capel, the Duke of Westminster, Grand Duke Dmitri, and Reverdy); and,
- work (e.g., “blazers”, “...costume jewellery, and the first perfume that speaks of women”, and “tweed”) of Gabrielle Chanel.

However, more significantly, this is transformed into codes, cues, and/or prompts for the consumer – it is not only Chanel's journey, but also “your journey.” This means that the objective is made personal, and subjective. Interestingly, the emotion of passion is transformed into transitive verbs. That is, the campaign offers the opportunity to partake in its', and a personal, story: the consumer is encouraged and invited to create (“to make, to design something from one's imagination; to complete, to invent”), dare (“to attempt, to undertake something with courage, audacity; to risk”), and seize (“to capitalize on an opportunity the moment it presents itself”). The potential significance of this, then, is that this campaign demonstrates that the heritage of an iconic label and its' past does not have to be stagnant – that is, it can be made relevant if transformed and translated. Here, the narrative was necessary in transforming and translating it in a way that balanced with the heritage and past (where the heritage and past was predominantly presented in symbols).

(b) *The imagery: The past in symbols*

A few of these images are outlined in Table 1, with an explanation of its' personal reference and/or symbolism.

Table 1. The contextualisation of the Gabrielle launch: An overview of imagery, and possible references and/or symbolism in the Phase 2 video.

Image	Personal reference and/or symbolism
-------	-------------------------------------

A beating heart.



Chanel's face in a logo similar to that of MGM Pictures, with her birth date, and date of death on either side, and references to wheat at the bottom.



The Chanel company logo (C) in the light coming from a glass stained window, as a possible reference to the structure (that may be reminiscent of a convent and/or church).



A baroque painting set in a Venetian church, with bouquets of Camellias on the table.



The Chanel No. 5 bottle, with an emphasis on its lines and simplicity.

This image introduces the principle of the "storyline" – that is the brand identity that is portrayed (here, it is one of "passion"). The beating heart is not only indicative of "passion," but also (figuratively) of Gabrielle Chanel "at the heart" of its identity and personality. Here the brand of Chanel (as alluded to by the brand logo, C, on either side) is further away from the heart than her name – perhaps suggesting that what is more important than the logo, is the person(al).

Gabrielle Chanel is "central" to the label, and its' storyline. Alluding to her being a celebrity and/or "star," there is a comparison of her life (extending from 1883 to 1971), to that of a film (in that an image and/or logo like this is often seen at a movie's start). Here, this comparison is consistent with her stating that "[She] became something of a celebrity, and there too, [she] created a fashion – couturiers as stars. Before [her] time that didn't exist" (Chanel, as cited in Morand, 1976, p. 45).

Additionally, this also alludes to her agreement with the film producer, Samuel Goldwyn, to travel to the United States and design exquisite wardrobes for a few of his Hollywood personalities (Picardie, 2010).

Furthermore, the imagery of wheat alludes to Chanel always having a bunch of wheat close to her, as emblematic of fortune and prosperity. This followed from a narrative where she was six, and a man who – as she recalled – from beneath her bed and in the darkness of the night threw wheat at her (Delay, 1973). Her father – in her made up remembrance of him – comforted and reassured her (Chaney, 2011; Madsen, 2009; Picardie, 2011).

After the death of her mother, Chanel's father placed her brothers [Alphonse Chanel (aged 10), and Lucien (aged 6)] in the care of a farm household, and Gabrielle Chanel (at the age of 11) and her sisters [Julia Bertha Chanel (aged 13), and Antoinette Julia Chanel (aged 8)] were left at the Aubazine convent orphanage. Chanel (as cited in Charles-Roux, 1976, p. 38) stated that she and her siblings "...did not hear another word from [their] father." Yet, she did not identify as an orphan.

In accounts of her life narrative, her years at the Aubazine convent orphanage, therefore, were the most obscure (Picardie, 2010). When she did mention it, the nuns at the orphanage were referred to as her "aunts," and they were often described as being without love and/or tenderness. In one of her more favourable narratives, Chanel said that they taught her how to make clothes and how to sew, and that "[she] owed them everything" (Chanel, as cited in Morand, 1976, p. 42) because this made it possible for her to have her career as a couturier, and for her establish her fashion house.

From this it is inferred that this particular visual is: (a) an acknowledgement of Chanel's early history as an orphan (in that the glass stained windows are a reference to the Aubazine convent orphanage); and, (b) an appreciation for how far she has come in establishing herself as fashion icon and "female figure with the most influence" (Chaney, 2011, p. xiii) of the 20th century. Considering that this a part of her own story that she often denied and/or distorted [for fear of not being humiliated, hurt and/or rejected (Verwey, 2018)] this is an especially important visual in that there is an acknowledgement and appreciation of every part of her story – that is, there is authenticity, honesty, and openness in returning to the start of her story.

Here, the baroque painting is symbolic of her support, and appreciation for the arts and creative efforts in general (Picardie, 2010). Chanel associated with artists, ballet dancers, composers, and playwrights; and collaborated with them on projects, and/or sponsored these.

The Venetian church, respectively, is symbolic of the time that Chanel lived and spent there. After Boy Capel's death [of whom she said that "To [her], he was [her] brother, [her] father, [her] entire family" (Morand, 1976, p. 34) because he was so important to her], she moved there in the early 1920's. It is also said that Chanel drew inspiration from the San Marco, a church in Venice, in designing her fine jewellery line for the International Guild of Diamond Merchants.

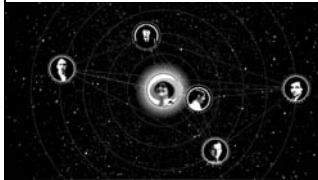
The bouquet of Camellias, lastly, is a reference to her favourite flower. In this regard it is reported that she fell in love with its' symbolism after reading Alexandre Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias*, a story in which the heroine always had it pinned to her, showing to the world that her heart was pure. "It was also loved by Chanel because, when wearing the flower, its lack of scent meant it never interfered with her most famous perfume – No. 5" (Evans, 2015).

Overall, there is also a particular reference to symmetry – a design principle that was significant to her.

This image is an obvious reference to the Chanel No. 5 fragrance that formally launched from the Rue Cambon boutique on May 5th, 1921. Gabrielle Chanel declared this to epitomize the scent of a woman (Chaney, 2011; Madsen, 2009; Picardie, 2010; Vaughan, 2012). An immediate success, this became the best-selling and most iconic scent in the world [in 2014, it was reported that every 30 seconds it was sold (Young, 2014b)].



An image of Chanel, in a dark sky filled with stars, and surrounded by the five men that she had personal relationships with.



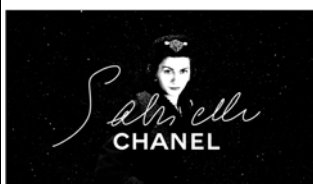
Images of Cocteau, Dali, Diaghilev, Misia and Picasso.



An image of the new perfume, Gabrielle, in a bottle that is comparable to – but also different from – the Chanel No. 5 scents.



An image of Gabrielle, with the Chanel branding and font, as well as her personal signature.



This image is an obvious reference to her relationships with Boy Capel, the Duke of Westminster, Duke Dmitri of Pavlovich, Igor Stravinsky, and Pierre Reverdy. Interestingly, it may also be a reference to her tendency to be at the “centre of others’ universes” in that she established herself as the loved object in particular relation to ‘rivals.’ She responded to these rivals by: (a) diminishing their significance [e.g., by not acknowledging the marriage in any of her narratives (as with the Duke of Westminster)]; and/or (b) further implying that the men – such as Capel, Reverdy and Stravinsky – were discontented in their marriages. The function of this was to protect the self (Verwey, 2018), and in including this possible reference speaks to her vulnerability.

These are particular references to her friendships with Cocteau, Dali, Diaghilev, Misia Misia and Picasso, where the cards themselves may be an indication of her own, personal superstitions [e.g., it has been previously reported that Chanel No.5 was named as such because 5 was her lucky number (The Scotsman, 2009), she often had lions presented in some way (as she was a Leo stars sign), and she also held onto the symbolism of wheat (Madsen, 2009; Picardie, 2011).

Here, there is a movement from the past represented in symbols, to the past reinterpreted and reinvented into new symbol: the Gabrielle perfume. In this way, the past is made relevant.

This follows from the introduction of the new perfume, presenting a synthesis of the brand and the person. Here, the decision to include her signature also transforms the objective (that is, the product) to a personal story, in returning to the “self.” This also further introduces the name of the new perfume.

The previous section considered the contextualisation of the *Gabrielle* launch by describing the short video, that formed part of the *Inside Chanel* strategy, and that was launched prior to the release of the scent. From this exploration it was revealed that this short video: (a) created a narrative that made personal references to the Chanel’s founder and the fragrance’s inspiration, Gabrielle Chanel, and (b) framed it in such a way that it was not only about Chanel’s journey, but also the consumer’s journey. Furthermore, this journey was made possible by prompts to create, dare and seize in that these are open to the subjective. This was complemented further by a focus on the heritage of the house, in that the black-and-white images were a nod to its’ past as presented in symbols. Here, there was a movement from the past, presented in symbols, to the past reinterpreted and reinvented into new symbol: the Gabrielle perfume. In this

way, the past was made relevant. This framed: (a) the imagery (the Gabrielle perfume), and (b) the narrative (“Invent a style and translate it into new, clean, precise fragrances that women wear like a garment”) in such a way, that – like a “garment” – the perfume was made subjective. This was important for its’ launch and official release (Phase 3), in that it offered an opportunity and point of reference for sense-giving and sense-making – that is, “Why Gabrielle?”

8.3 Phase 3: The campaign and the official perfume release

With the Gabrielle perfume’s release, the advertising campaign was released. This consisted of 2 elements: an ad print (with the face of the fragrance, Kristen Stewart, in profile – and, importantly, as an incarnation of Gabrielle), and 2 days prior to its’ release, a short video. Accompanied by a ballad by Beyoncé, *Runnin’* (first released in 2009), this short video features Gabrielle’s incarnation – that is, an androgynous Kristen Stewart – breaking from a cocoon of gauze, as explained in an official statement (Chanel, as cited in Morrill, 2017). At full-steam, but with gauze trailing (as a metaphor, perhaps, for being restrained in some way), she sprints towards – and breaks through – a glass wall made up the of Chanel Gabrielle perfume (Morrill, 2017; Muller, 2017). Here, the lyrics supplement the visual:

“These four lonely walls have changed the way I feel / The way I feel / I’m standing still / Runnin’, runnin’, runnin’, runnin’
Runnin’, runnin’, runnin’ / Ain’t runnin’ from myself no more”.

In exploring this further it is suggested that this video illustrates the importance of “layers” in narrative transportation – here, the elicitation of emotion is the first layer; followed by a more nuanced reference to the spirit of Gabrielle Chanel.

Jointly these moved to “the opposite...from storytelling” (e.g., as in Phase 2) as suggested by Thomas du Pré de Saint-Maur – the Chanel global head of creative resources (Muller, 2017). In the official press release he stated that “The new Chanel fragrance named Gabrielle...conveys a message [that] invites young women to live freely, by and for themselves” – that is, the eliciting of emotion; and, that embodies the extraordinary personality of Gabrielle Chanel (that is, the nuanced reference to her spirit).

In this way, there was a change in the focus on her life and story (e.g., as in Phase 2) to a focus on her “free personality” and rebellious spirit. The more obvious references, in this regard, are seen in: (a) the breaking free from the gauze, and a breaking through the wall (to elicit of emotions of freedom and liberation), in order to (b) demonstrate her passion and rebelliousness as significant to her spirit. This offered the story in such a way that it could be made personal and subjective. Here, the invitation to be liberated is the offering that speaks to women who aspire to freedom and liberty, and/or who consider themselves to embody passion and rebelliousness – without excluding those who do not have an intimate knowledge of the story. For those who do have a more intimate knowledge of her story, however, there is also a more nuanced offering.

Chanel’s denial of her own reality and truth is inherent to this story – “[Chanel] made up things” about her childhood, her family, and her history in presenting a romanticized story (Madsen, 2009, pp. 3-4). She also distorted, exaggerated, and perpetually revised this; and estranged those who knew that this it did not fit with the legend she portrayed – that is, she negated many parts of her story (Chaney, 2011; Madsen, 2009; Picardie, 2010). By doing so, she defended against any incursion or

intrusion of objective reality in protecting her subjective world, in that there was a self-split between ‘Coco’ – the legend, star, and self-made woman; and, ‘Gabrielle’ – the orphan who was rejected (Verwey, 2018). In an account to Delay (1973) she asserted that she abandoned her first name because “...[her] father didn’t like the name Gabrielle at all – it hadn’t been his choice. So he called [her] ‘Little Coco’ instead” (Chanel, as cited in Delay, 1973, p. 18). After discontinuation of the prefix, she became Coco (Chanel) to both her father and the world. By changing her name, to her father’s liking, Picardie (2011) suggests that Chanel adapted her child self from an entity her father rejected, to an entity that was favoured and greatly loved. Here, ‘Coco’ was likened to a loved self, and – at a later stage – a star, and a self-made woman; differentiated from ‘Gabriele,’ which was likened to poverty, rejection, and shame. ‘Gabrielle,’ thus, was not integrated as a part of reality, and/or as a part of the self (Verwey, 2018), as further implied by her statement “the Little Coco cried when...they called her Gabrielle” (Chanel, as cited in Morand, 1976, p. 34).

The potential significance of this for this campaign, and the Gabrielle launch overall, is that it not only acknowledged ‘Gabrielle’ as part of the ‘self,’ and as part of the story – but also celebrated and embraced it in a way that the founder, herself, could not. This, it is contended, is an example of how iconic positioning and strategy can be authentic – not only in its’ brand design, brand development, and brand strategy – but also in the narrative that it offers. It also demonstrates that genuineness can be integrated in such a way that: (a) the brand’s heritage is preserved, while (b) it is celebrated, and integrated in new ways (as demonstrated by the lyrics of the song, ‘Ain’t runnin’ from myself no more,’ Gabrielle is integrated as part of the story). For those who have a more intimate knowledge of the self-split between ‘Coco’ and ‘Gabrielle,’ this narrative offering and transportation brings with it the iconic and implicit message that one should not have to “run” from the self. In this way, it does not only offer what has been offered previously as a reflection of the self (that is, ‘Coco’ and that about her which has been taken to be true) – but a self that is true (that is, Gabrielle and her past from which she ran). Authenticity is an embrace of all parts of the self and story – and, importantly, can be made subjective. This campaign emphasises this, in that the consumer can extend her or his identity into the narrative that is offered – whether it is about aspiring to and/or embodying particular traits or, about embracing all parts of the self. This legitimizes its’ positioning because there is a de-emphasis on materialistic motives (profit), and an emphasis on psychological ‘rewards’ such as self-acceptance, self-authentication, and self-enhancement.

8.4 Phase 4: Iconic and indexical prompts

Following the fragrance’s official release, Chanel posted a range of short videos across its’ Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter platforms – here, Instagram was its’ most used platform – over a period of \pm a week. These are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. A follow-up to the Gabrielle official release: An overview of short videos on Chanel’s Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms.

Date	Chapter / title	Caption	Content of video
15 September 2017	GABRIELLE CHANEL	A floral, radiant feminine fragrance, created around 4 points of light from 4 white flowers.	<i>Narration:</i> None.
16 September 2017	GABRIELLE CHANEL	The birth of a solar fragrance.	<i>Narration:</i> None.
17 September 2017	GABRIELLE CHANEL – The bottle. (<i>Chapitre Le Flacon</i>)	A lesson in purity. Audaciously simple, it reveals the full radiance of the fragrance.	<i>Narration:</i> None.

18 September 2017	GABRIELLE CHANEL – The fragrance. (<i>Chapitre La Fragrance</i>)	A solar fragrance composition. It is the perfect flower, a radiant, sparkling and purely feminine CHANEL flower.	<i>Narration:</i> GABRIELLE is a floral perfume. It's luminous, solar and feminine. In this context, I worked with white flowers, looking for effects, impressions of sparkling light. Creating a perfume is empirical. There is no real theory to it.
19 September 2017	GABRIELLE CHANEL – The flowers. (<i>Chapitre Les Fleurs</i>)	A major floral accord. In the new composition, flowers take on an unprecedented presence.	<i>Narration:</i> I wanted to stress this imaginary white flower which is a bouquet made up of 4 flowers: orange blossom, ylang-ylang, jasmine, and tuberose. I love what Gabrielle Chanel said: she wanted an artificial perfume. That is, a composed perfume, a constructed perfume. There's the idea of faceting, of blending the essences to create a new identity.
20 September 2017	GABRIELLE CHANEL – The harvest. (<i>Chapitre La Récolte</i>)	A legendary heritage. The birthplace of perfumery, Grasse is where the flowers are harvested and refined.	<i>Narration:</i> When you talk about Chanel perfumes, you always end up talking about flowers. The tuberose is a flower we grow ourselves in Grasse. For the first time, we used a new extract of tuberose. We created this new extract with a brand new technique, which lets the flower reveal its natural character with all its complexity.
21 September 2017	GABRIELLE CHANEL – The inspiration. (<i>Chapitre L'Inspiration</i>)	A fragrance inspired by Gabrielle Chanel, a rebel at heart, passionate and free, who chose her identity and her destiny.	<i>Narration:</i> This perfume was created with the ingredients that Gabrielle Chanel often used and they end up forming the house spirit. In the flowers, there is this very stretched-out, very sparkling aspect, which I find radiant and sparkingly luminous. I associate white flowers with a strong character, which corresponds perfectly with Chanel Gabrielle.

As outlined, the series of 7 videos followed from images of the perfume, with no narrative to a series of 5 Chapters (here, the chapters are consistent with Phase 2). These chapters are all narrated by Olivier Polge (Chanel's in-house perfumer, and the creator of the Gabrielle scent), and complemented by images that pertain to that which is being spoken of (e.g., with the bottle chapter the viewer has a visual experience of the glass being moulded; with the fragrance chapter the viewer has a visual experience of the laboratory where it is made; with the harvest chapter the viewer has a visual experience of the fields in Grasse, where the flowers are handpicked) – and that, importantly, move from the objective (e.g., the bottle) to that which is more and more personal (e.g., the harvest, and the inspiration). Here, the aspects that are more objective are referred to as the “indexical prompts” – the consumer is confronted with the objective parts of the perfume; and the aspects that are more personal are referred to as “iconic” prompts, in that these form part of the story. With the Gabrielle campaign, this

particular story started with an experiential immersion (Phase 1), an invitation to partake in the story (Phase 2), an offering of the story (Phase 3), and then making meaning of the story (Phase 4). At each of these phases, there was a balance of the consumers' projections of themselves into the storylines, with the brands' existing heritage and narrative(s). While the focus of Phases 2 and 3, specifically, were aligned with Gabrielle Chanel's heritage and narratives (that is, her characteristics, life, and work), Phase 4 moved to the house's narrative at present.

9 The campaign: Gabrielle as authentic reflection of Chanel

An analysis of the Chanel Gabrielle launch was offered in the previous section, as an example of how iconic luxury brand positioning and strategy can be successful. This demonstrates that an emphasis on the 'intangible' (e.g., aesthetic experiences, artistic heritage, authenticity, association, identity, personality, and symbolism) – as opposed to the 'tangible' (e.g., craftsmanship, price, and quality) – is valuable, in moving from a non-personal orientation to an orientation that is more personal and subjective. This move has been significant to the success of Chanel in establishing an online presence; and, in the Gabrielle launch in particular. Delineated as occurring in phases, this demonstrated that experiential immersion occurred in Phase 1 in that there was an 'experience' the Gabrielle perfume. This extended into Phase 2, in which there was an inclusive invitation to partake in the story. In this phase, specifically, there was a successful balance between this inclusive invitation, as prompted by the transitive verbs (to create, dare, and seize) – and its historic and narrative symbolism. As such this campaign successfully reframed and adapted the iconic Chanel brand. This was accomplished through constant contextualisation and adaptation and fine-tuning in respect of their brand audience.

There is a differentiation in the levels of schemacity in that it speaks to those who do, and those who do not have an intimate knowledge of the story and symbolism (as summarized in Table 1), but are prompted to respond subjectively. This is further implemented in Phase 3, in that: (a) it that it elicited emotions (e.g., freedom, liberty, passion, and rebelliousness) from those who do not have a more intimate knowledge of the story and symbolism, in its' offering to partake in the story; while, (b) those who have an intimate knowledge have a more nuanced offering that can be responded to (that is, the integration all parts of the self, and of the story). Here, it is important to note that this offering is not only offered – but also responded to – by Chanel in that it celebrated and embraced all facets of its' heritage and history in the name of the perfume, and its' visuals in a way that even its' founder did not. However, this does not mean that the objective was not offered. Here, it was offered in Phase 4 where factual information was presented. In presenting this, craftsmanship, creation, and exclusivity were the facets of luxury that were stressed (e.g., as illustrated by statements such as "We created this new extract with a brand new technique,"), while also including iconic references ("I love what Gabrielle Chanel said") and personal and social values.

Collectively, this analysis of the Gabrielle perfume launch demonstrates how iconic luxury branding can be successful when a brand celebrates its history, but also connects emotionally so that the brand engagement can be made personal and subjective. Combined with consistency and continuity, this also contributes to its' legitimacy and nostalgia. For the Gabrielle launch, this was particularly seen in that it stressed the subjective – the focus was not on material values, but on needs that relate to the self (such as self-actualisation, self-concept, and self-enhancement). In this way, it extended on its' heritage and history so that there is a narrative transportation. This further illustrates how luxury can meet the millennial in that it connects its' identity and

personality (Gabrielle), with its' heritage and history as an authentic source that can be used for action, along with guides for interpretation (its' iconic and indexical prompts, storytelling, and symbolism), presented in a visual way. In a world of material abundance, the understanding luxury has changed from a physical concept where material possessions are a measure of success, to a more emotional, experiential and aspirational state of mind (Fisk, 2017). Within a postmodern economy consumers increasingly seek out connections with brands that not only satisfy their functional and higher order hedonistic needs, but also allow them to express their authentic selves and social affiliations in ways that affirm who they are or aspire to be. With the launch of the Gabrielle campaign Chanel has succeeded in authentically reinterpreting its iconic brand values within an emerging contemporary cultural context.

References

- Aaker, J L. & Drolet, A., (1996), To Thine Own Self Be True: The Meaning of "Sincerity" in Brands and Its Impact on Consumer Evaluations., *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 23.
- Aaker, J., (1997) Dimensions of Brand Personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*. Vol. 34, 3: 347-356 DOI: 10.2307/3151897
- Aaker, J L. (1999), The Malleable Self: The Role of Self-Expression in Persuasion, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36 (1), 45-57.
- Adaval, R., & Wyer, R. (1998). The Role of Narrative in Consumer Information Processing. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 7(3), 207-248.
- Aliferis, G. (August 25th, 2017). *How Chanel became the most social luxury brand*. Available from <https://www.luxurysociety.com/en/articles/2017/08/how-chanel-became-most-social-luxury-brand/>
- Arnould, D. & Price, L.L. (2000) Authenticating acts and authoritative performances: Questing for self and community. In Rathneshwar, S., Mick, D.G. & Huffman, C. (Eds.) *The why of consumption. Contemporary perspectives on motives, goals and desires*. Routledge, London, U.K.
- Atwal, G and Williams, A. (2009), luxury brand marketing: the experience is everything, *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 16, No. 5/6, pp. 338-346.
- Baron, K., (2015). The Secrets to Luxury Online for Millennial'. Luxury Society. Available at: <http://luxurysociety.com/articles/2015/09/the-secrets-to-luxury-online-for-millennials>.
- Barton, C., Fromm, J., & Egan, C., 2012 '*The Millennial Consumer – Debunking Stereotype*'. Boston Consulting Group. Available at: https://www.bcgperspectives.com/content/articles/consumer_insight_marketing_millennial_consumer
- Benedick, C. (June 12th, 2017). *How did Chanel become one of the most iconic fashion brands?* Available from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-did-chanel-become-one-most-iconic-fashion-brands-carl-benedick>
- Biel, A.L (1992) How brand image drives brand equity. *Journal of Advertising Research*, November/December: 9.
- Brown, S., Kozinets, R.V., & Sherry, J.F. (2003). Teaching old brands new tricks: Retro-branding and the revival of brand meaning. *Journal of Marketing*, 67(3), 19-33.
- Bain & Company (2014). *Luxury Good's Worldwide Market Study*, Vol. 2014, Bain & Company.
- Batra, R. & Homer, P.M. (2004) The Situational Impact of Brand Image Beliefs *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 318-330, 2004
- Beverland, M. B., (2005). Brand management and the challenge of authenticity. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 14(7), 460-461
- Beverland, M.B., & Farelly, F. J. (2010). The quest for authenticity in consumption: Consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 36(5): 838-865.
- Biel, A.L. (1992) How brand image drives brand equity. *Journal of Advertising Research*, November/December: 9.
- Bomsel, O., (2014). Free-Riding and Luxury Brands on the Internet. *International Business Research*, 7 (3): 60-71.
- Boyle, D. (2003). *Authenticity: Brands, fakes, spin and the lust for real life*. London: Beverland, M.B., & Farelly, F. J. (2010). The quest for authenticity in consumption. Consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 36(5): 838-865.

- Brun, A. & Castelli, C., (2013). 'The nature of luxury: a consumer perspective'. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*. 41(11/12): 823-847. Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com.ezproxy.metropolia.fi/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/IJRDM-01-2013-0006>
- Bruhn, M. Schoenmüller, V. Schäfer, D., & Heinrich, D. (2012). *Brand Authenticity: Towards a Deeper Understanding of Its Conceptualization and Measurement*, in Gürhan-Canli, Z, Otnes, C & Zhu, R (Eds.) - *Advances in Consumer Research Volume 40*: Association for Consumer Research, Duluth, NA pp. 567-576.
- Boston Consulting Group, (2014). *The Millennial Generation Is Changing the Face of Consumer Marketing*. Available at: <http://www.bcg.com/news/press/15jan2014-millennial-generation-changing-face-consumer-marketing.aspx>
- Calder, B. J., Malthouse, E. C., & Schaedel, U. (2009). An experimental study of the relationship between online engagement and advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23(4), 321–331.
- Carroll, B. A. & Ahuvia, A. (2006), "Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love", *Marketing Letters*, Vol. 17 No. 2: 79-89.
- Casamassima, P. and Roya-Vela, M. (2010). The influence of belonging to virtual brand communities on consumers' affective commitment, satisfaction and word-of-mouth advertising: the ZARA case. *Online Information Review*, 4:517-542. Available from <http://0-www.emeraldinsight.com.ujlink.uj.ac.za/journals.htm?issn=14684527&volume=35&issue=4&articleid=1944272&show=html>
- Carsana, L. & Jolibert, A. (2018). Influence of iconic, indexical cues, and brand schematicity on perceived authenticity dimensions of private-label brands. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*: 213–220
- Cardamenis, F., (2015). Millennials lowest spenders, but most common luxury shoppers: report. *Luxury Daily*. Available at: <http://www.luxurydaily.com/millennials-lowest-spenders-but-most-common-luxury-shoppers-shullman>
- Chaney, L. (2011). *Coco Chanel: An intimate life*. London, UK: Penguin Books.
- Choi, H., Ko, E., Kim, E.Y., Mattila, P., (2015). The role of fashion brand authenticity in product management: a holistic marketing approach. *J. Prod. Innovation Management*. 32:233–242. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jpim.12175>.
- Delay, C. (1983). *Chanel solitaire* (B. Bray, Trans.). Paris, France: Éditions Gallimard
- Diamond, N., Sherry, J. F., Jr., Muniz, A. M., Jr., McGrath, M. A., Kozinets, R. V., & Borghini, S. (2009). American Girl and the brand gestalt: Closing the loop on sociocultural branding research. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(May), 118–134
- Du Plessis, C., (2018). Prosumer engagement through story-making in transmedia branding. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877917750445>
- Ellwood, I. & Shekar, S., (2008). *Wonder Woman. Marketing Secrets for the Trillion-Dollar Customer*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Evans, M. (October 19th, 2015). Coco Chanel's relationship with the camellia (Online newspaper article). *The Telegraph*. Available from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/how-to-grow/chanel-s-favourite-flower-the-camellia/>
- Faw, L., (2012). Meet the Millennial 1%: Young, Rich, And Redefining Luxury. *Forbes*. Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/larissafaw/2012/10/02/meet-the-millennial-1-young-rich-and-redefining-luxury/#1ed69eeb8caa>
- Fisk, P. (2017). The future of luxury...how can luxury brands capture the new luxuries of time, individuality, authenticity, belonging and experiences? <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/future-luxury-how-can-brands-capture-new-luxuries-time-peter-fisk/>
- Fitzpatrick, T. (October 5th, 2012). Chanel launches new interactive brand archive. *Elle magazine*. Available from <https://www.elle.com/fashion/news/a19610/chanel-online-archive-launches-with-video/>
- Folse, J.A. Guidry-Moulard, J. & Raggio, R.D. (2012). Psychological ownership: A social marketing advertising message appeal. Not for women. *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol 31(2): 291-315.
- Forbes. (2017). *The world's most valuable brands*. Available from <https://www.rankingthebrands.com/The-Brand-Rankings.aspx?rankingID=334&year=1161>
- Fuchs, C., (2014). *Social media: A critical introduction*. London, U.K.: Sage.
- Green, M.C., & Brock, T.C. (2000) The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Vol 79 (5): 701-721.
- Gustafson, K., 2015. *Millennials redefine luxury – and the stakes are high*. CNBC. Available at: <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/02/18-redefine-luxury-and-the-stakes-are-high.html>
- Goulding, C., (1999) "Consumer research, interpretive paradigms and methodological ambiguities", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 33 Issue: 9/10: 859-873, <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569910285805>

- Grayson, K., & Martinec, R. (2004). Consumer Perceptions of Iconicity and Indexicality and Their Influence on Assessments of Authentic Market Offerings. *Journal of Consumer Research* 31(2):296-313
DOI10.1086/422109
- Hennigs, N., Wiedmann, K.-P., Klarmann, C., Strehlau, S., Godey, B., Pederzoli, D., Neulinger, A., Dave, K., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., Taro, K., Taborecka-Petrovicova, J., Santos, C. R., Jung, J., & Oh, H. (2012): What is the Value of Luxury? A Cross-Cultural Consumer Perspective, *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 29 (12):. 1018-1034.
- Hollenbeck, C. R. & Zinkhan, G. M. (2010). Anti-brand communities, negotiation of brand meaning, and the learning process: The case of Wall-Mart. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 13 (3), 325
- Hollis, N., (2008). *The global brand*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Holt, D.B. (2002). Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding. *Journal of Consumer Research*. Vol. 29, No. 1: 70-90.
- Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. 2013. *Spreadable media. Creating value and meaning in a networked culture*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Kapferer, J. N., & Bastien, V. (2009). *The luxury strategy: break the rules of marketing to build luxury brands*. Kogan Page Limited, United Kingdom.
- Kapferer, J. N. (2009b) The specificity of luxury management: turning the market upside down. *Brand Management*.16: 311-322.
- Kapferer, K.N. (2012). Abundant rarity. The key to luxury growth. *Business Horizons*, 55: 453-462
- Kim, O., Kwon, Y., Moon, J., & Sung, S. (2010.) An explorative study of Korean consumer participation in virtual brand communities in social network sites. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 23:430-455.<http://0-web.ebscohost.com.ujlink.uj.ac.za/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=a6094eb1-5a2f-4e80-b861-87740701ecc5%40sessionmgr15&vid=1&hid=7>
- Kim A.E., Lloyd, S., & Ceverllon, C.M. (2015). Narrative-transportation storylines in luxury brand advertising: *Journal of Business Research* · August 2015:
- Komatsu, L. K., (1992). Recent views of conceptual structure. *Psychology Bulletin*. 112 (3), 500–526
- Kotler, P. and Keller, K. (2006) *Marketing Management*. 12th Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River.
- Leigh. T. Peters, C.O. & Shelton, J. (2006). The Consumer Quest for Authenticity: The Multiplicity of Meanings Within the MG Subculture of Consumption. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 34(4) DOI10.1177/009207030628840
- Madsen, A. (2009). *Coco Chanel: A biography*. London, UK: Bloomsbury.
- McCarthy, N., (February 11th, 2014). The brilliance of Coco Chanel. *The New Zealand Herald Newspaper*. Available from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/vivamagazine/news/article.cfm?c_id=533&objectid=11199480
- Millennial Week. (2014). Millennials by the Numbers. Available at: http://millennialweek.com/MILL-FactSheet_52914_v2.pdf
- Morand, P. (1976). *L'Allure de Chanel* (E. Cameron, Trans.). Paris, France: Hermann Publishing.
- Morhart, F., Malär, L., Guèvremont, A., Girardin, F., Grohmann, B., (2015). Brand authenticity an integrative framework and measurement scale. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*., 25:200 -218.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2014.11.006>.
- Morrill, H. (August 28th, 2017). Kristen Stewart dances to Beyoncé in Chanel's new fragrance ad (Online magazine article). *ELLE Magazine*. Available from <https://www.elle.com/beauty/news/a47690/kristen-stewart-chanel-gabrielle-ad/>
- Moulton, N. (July 5th, 2017). Chanel unveils Gabrielle, its major new perfume. *Vogue*, July 2017. Available from <http://www.vogue.co.uk/article/chanel-gabrielle-new-perfume-review>
- MPP Consulting. (2010). *The top 100 French brands*. Available from <https://www.rankingthebrands.com/The-Brand-Rankings.aspx?rankingID=172&year=251>.
- Muller, M. G. (August 28th, 2017). Kristen Stewart runs to a Beyoncé song in latest Chanel ad (Online magazine article). *W Magazine*. Available from <https://www.wmagazine.com/story/kristen-stewart-chanel-gabrielle-ad-beyonce>
- Nagasawa, S., & Irisawa, Y. (2011). *Luxury strategy of beauty products by Chanel*. Available from <http://studylib.net/doc/8105781/luxury-strategy-of-beauty-products-by-chanel>.
- Napoli, J., Dickinson, S.J., Beverland, M.B., Farrelly, F., (2014). Measuring consumer-based brand authenticity. *Journal of Business Research*. 67, 1090–1098. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.06.001>.
- Napoli, J., Dickinson-Delaporte, S. & Beverland, M.B. (2016). The brand authenticity continuum: strategic approaches for building value. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32: 13-14: 1201-1229.
- Nia, A & Zaichowsky, J.L. (2000). Do counterfeits devalue the ownership of luxury brands. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 9 (7): 485-497.
- Owens, S., (2018). Millennials Demand Transparency From Luxury Brands. *Jing Daily*.

- <https://jingdaily.com/consumers-luxury-authenticity/>
- Percy, L. & Rossiter, J.R. (1992). A model of brand awareness and brand attitude advertising strategies. *Psychology of Marketing*. Volume 9, Issue 4July/August 1992 :263–274
- Picardie, J. (2011). *Coco Chanel: The legend and life*. London, UK: Harper Collins.
- Plummer, J. T. (2000). How Personality Makes a Difference *Journal of Advertising Research*, 40 (6)
- Sheinin, D., & Biehal, G. (1999). Corporate advertising pass-through onto the brand: some experimental evidence. *Marketing Letters*. 1, 63–73.
- Schmidt, S., 2015. Why Millennials are Reshaping the Luxury Market. Available at: <http://blog.marketresearch.com/why-millennials-arereshaping-the-luxury-market>
- Sierra, J. J., & McQuitty, S. (2007) Attitudes and Emotions as Determinants of Nostalgia Purchases: An Application of Social Identity Theory, *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 15(2), 99-112.
- Simms, C., & Trott, P. (2006). The perceptions of the BMW Mini Brand: the importance of historical associations and the development of a model. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 15(4): 228-238. DOI: 10.1108/ 10610420610679593
- Squires, D. 2011. Experiential marketing: build brand communities. *Admap*: July/August 2011. Available from <http://0www.warc.com.ujlink.uj.ac.za/Content/ContentViewer.aspx?MasterContentRef=82cd1637-8cee-48fb-8604-c65882b3546d&q=brand+communities>.
- Starbuck, W.H. and Milliken, F.J., Executives' Perceptual Filters: What They Notice and How They Make Sense (1988). Donald Hambrick (ed.). *The Executive Effect: Concepts and Methods for Studying Top Managers*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1988, pp. 35-65. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2708156>
- The Economist, (2014). Marques for Millennials. Young people choose and buy differently. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21635762-youngpeople-choose-and-buy-differently-marques-millennials> [Accessed: 4 August, 2016]
- Taylor, J. R. and Van Every, E. J. (2000) *The Emergent Organization: Communication as Its Site and Surface*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
- The Scotsman. (July 21st, 2009). *Playing Coco: Coco Chanel*. Available from <https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/culture/fashion/playing-coco-coco-chanel-1-761159>
- Torelli, C., Chui, C., Key, H. T., & Amaral, N. (2009). Brand Iconicity: A shared reality perspective. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 36, 108–109.
- Vaughan, H. (2012). *Sleeping with the enemy: Coco Chanel's secret war*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Verwey, L. (2018). *Coco Chanel: A psychobiographical research study* (Unpublished masters thesis). University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Verwey, S. (2015). Self-expression and collaborative 'prosumption' in the digital brandscape. *Communicatio*, 41 (3): 320-339.
- Visconti, L.M. (2010) Authentic brand narratives: Co-constructed Mediterraneanness for L'Occitane Brand. *Research in Consumer Behavior*. Vol 12: 231-260.
- Weick, K.E., Sutcliffe, K.M. & Obstfeld, D. (2005) Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking. *Organization Science* 16:4: 409-421
- Yarrow, K. & O'Donnell, J., (2009). *Gen BuY. How Tweens, Teens, and Twenty- Some things Are Revolutionizing Retail*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Young, K., (2014a). The young and the excess. *JCK Magazine*. <http://www.jckonline.com/2014/10/05/young-and-excess-what-jewelers-need-to-know-about-millennials>.
- Young, K. (29th May, 2014b). The history of Chanel No. 5. *The Telegraph*. Available from <http://fashion.telegraph.co.uk/beauty/news-features/TMG10862749/The-history-of-Chanel-No.5.html>.
- Young, A. M. & Hinesly, M. D., (2012). 'Identifying Millennials' key influencers from early childhood: insights into current consumer preferences'. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*. 29(2) :146-155. Available from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com.ezproxy.metropolia.fi/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/07363761211206393>